

THE CALIFORNIA WATER QUALITY MONITORING COUNCIL

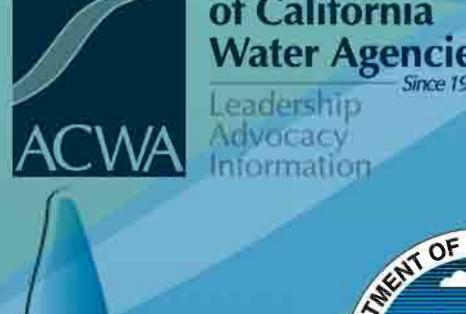
- State regulatory and resource management agencies
- The regulated community
- Water supply interests
- Citizen monitoring groups • The scientific community and
- The public

The breadth of representation on this council is unique.

















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EVERYONE NEEDS DATA

- 211,000 miles of rivers and streams
- over 1.6 million acres of lakes
- 1,100 miles of coastline
- 1.3 million acres of bays and estuaries
- 15 million acre-feet of groundwater extracted per year

Many local, state, and federal agencies, regulated dischargers, and hundreds of water bond grant recipients spend millions of dollars each year collecting water quality data in California.

These data must be turned into useable information to help decision makers and stakeholders understand

- The status of our waters and aquatic ecosystems,
- · Public health and welfare issues related to water quality, and
- The effectiveness of agency programs to manage our water resources.

THE WATER QUALITY INFORMATION PROBLEM

But California's water quality information system is defective

- There are inconsistent monitoring objectives and methods to collect and
- As shown in this map of 2006 impaired waters listings, differences in assessment strategies makes it appear that North Coast Region waters are the most impaired, when they are actually some of the state's cleanest waters.
- Often it is not possible to integrate data from different studies.
- No Single user-friendly place to access the data



THE RESPONSE - SENATE BILL 1070

- Became state law in 2006
- Required formation of California Water Quality Monitoring Council
- Memorandum of Understanding between
- California Environmental Protection Agency California Natural Resources Agency
- By December 1, 2008: Monitoring Council recommendations
- Maximize efficiency and effectiveness of existing water quality data collection and dissemination
- Ensure collected data available to decision makers and public

THE MONITORING COUNCIL'S SOLUTION

Don't get mired in technical details!

- Focus first on streamlined data access Theme-based web portals
- Directly address users' questions
- Single global point of entry
- Issue-specific workgroups
- Overarching Monitoring Council guidance

Water Quality WATER QUALITY WEBSITE

To illustrate this concept, the Monitoring Council is developing the My Water Quality website to provide a single, global access point to a set of theme-based internet portals for water quality monitoring data and assessment information.

The website is designed around intuitively clear questions that are readily understood by managers, the public, and scientists.

- Is our water safe to drink?
- Is it safe to swim in our waters?
- Is it safe to eat fish and shellfish from our waters?
- Are our aquatic ecosystems healthy?
- What stressors and processes affect our water quality?



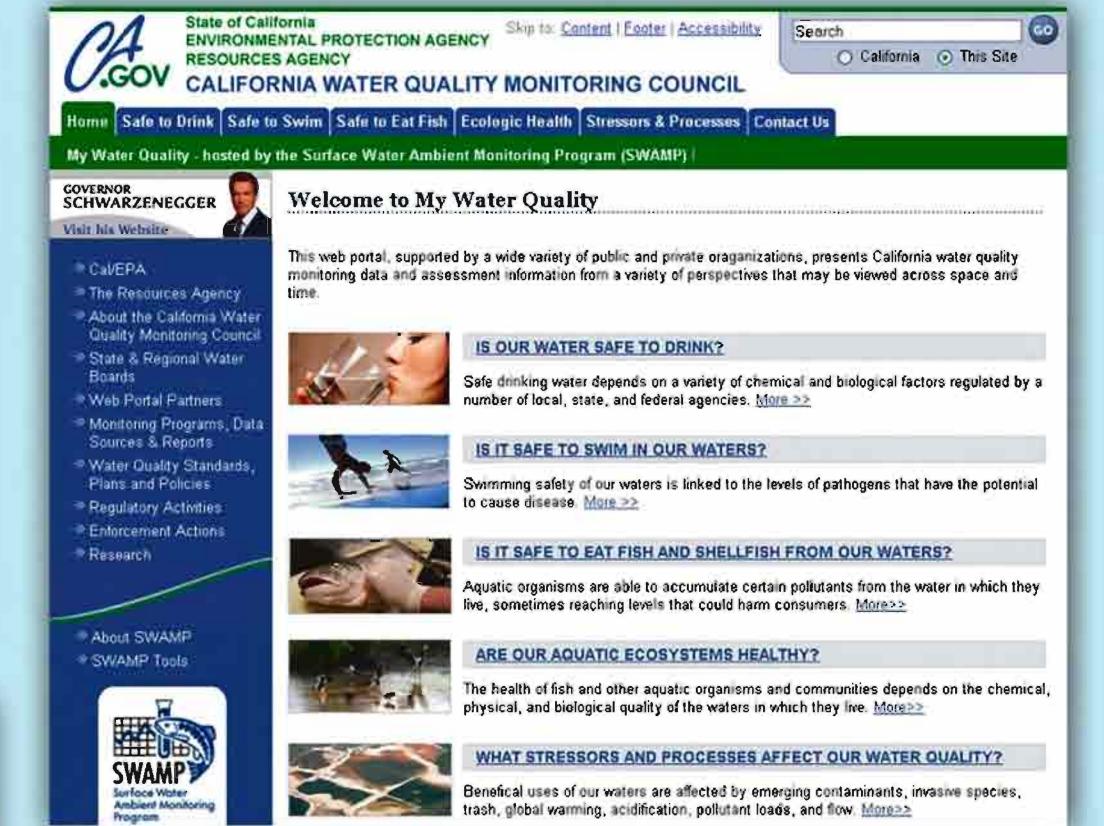
Rather than focusing on technical details, such as methods consistency and standard data formats, the recommendations

The Monitoring Council believes that the best way to coordinate and enhance California's monitoring, assessment and reporting efforts is first

to provide a platform for intuitive, streamlined access to water quality information that directly addresses users' questions.

ssue-specific workgroups, under the overarching guidance of the Monitoring Council,

- Will evaluate existing monitoring, assessment and
- · And work to enhance those efforts so as to improve the delivery of water quality information to the user, in the form of theme-based internet portals.

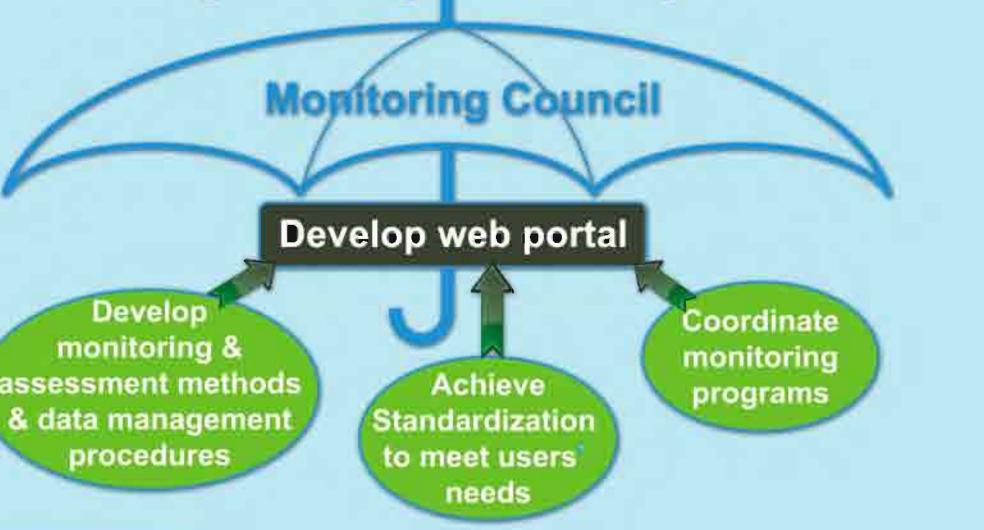


Each question leads to a series of web pages that provide map-based access to summary assessment products and more detailed monitoring data that address more detailed

Links along the left-hand side of each page enable users to access technical information specific to each theme.

THEME-SPECIFIC WORKGROUPS

Issue-experts represent key stakeholders Each portal is developed and maintained by a theme-specific





Specific themes were chosen for initial action, building on existing efforts that had already made substantial progress. The Safe-to-Swim portal initially focuses on Coastal Beaches, Bays & Estuaries

- The Beach Water Quality Workgroup coordinates the monitoring efforts of state and local agencies and coastal dischargers, and the assessment efforts of regional environmental interests.
- These data and a variety of assessment tools are included in this web portal, released to the public in July 2009

The Safe-to-Eat Fish and Shellfish portal initially focuses on

- The Bioaccumulation Oversight Group is a collaborative effort of a number of state agencies and others to assess the accumulation of pollutants, such as mercury and legacy pesticides, in fish that people eat.
- A portal based on their work was released in early December 2009

The first Aquatic Ecosystem Health portal focuses on Wetlands

- The California Wetland Monitoring Workgroup coordinates the efforts of 23 state, federal, and local organizations to assess the extent and health of California's wetlands
- · Their California Wetlands portal was released in March of this year

Other workgroups are organizing to develop additional portals on

- marine rocky intertidal ecosystems, and
- the safety of California's groundwater resources for human

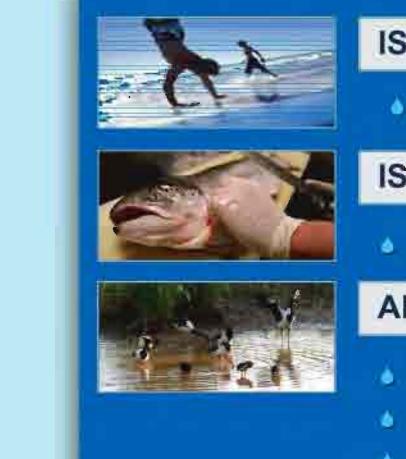
workgroup. The green ovals together represent the en-

The workgroups are

 staffed by issue experts representing key stakeholders • that develop a web portal devoted to their specific theme. Each workgroup develops monitoring and assessment methods and data management procedures according to performance measures defined by Monitoring Council.

The workgroups

- · coordinate existing monitoring programs within their theme, · achieve standardization necessary to meet users' needs, and
- report periodically to Monitoring Council.



IS IT SAFE TO SWIM IN OUR WATERS?

 Coastal beaches, bays & estuaries – July 200 IS IT SAFE TO EAT FISH AND SHELLFISH?

Sport fish – December 2009 ARE OUR AQUATIC ECOSYSTEMS HEALTHY?

- Wetlands March 2010
 - Streams Future Marine Rocky Intertidal – Future
 - IS OUR WATER SAFE TO DRINK?

ROLE OF THE MONITORING COUNCIL

- Establish policies and guidelines
- Clearinghouse for
- Standards • Guidelines
- Collaboration

CALIFORNIA'S COMPREHENSIVE WATER QUALITY MONITORING PROGRAM STRATEGY

www.waterboards.ca.gov/water issues/ programs/monitoring council

My Water Quality Portals



www.CaWaterQuality.net

As called for by the enabling legislation, the Monitoring Council is poised to propose a comprehensive water quality monitoring program strategy for California, based on its recommendations and the success of initial workgroup and web portal efforts.